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ABSTRACT

In order to clarify the process and criteria by which faculty at Castleton State College in Vermont are chosen for merit awards, the faculty union representative and an administration representative were interviewed. Problems of evaluation and funding, common in merit programs, were found to be paramount, and it became evident that the ideal merit award program would have to be scaled down to be realistic. It was also decided that the fairness of the plan and a positive impact on faculty morale were very important. In the plan developed, a committee of faculty and administration representatives would arrive at a written statement of criteria for awards. The individual faculty member would use these criteria as guidelines, and request consideration for an award at the time of the annual faculty evaluation report. The written request, supported by documentation of the faculty member's performance, would be submitted directly to the academic dean. A decision would be made based on the written guidelines, and notification of the decision and/or the amount of the award would be made by August 31st. (MSE)

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A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES GOVERNING ADMINISTRATIVE MERIT FOR FACULTY AT CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE

EDUCATIONAL POLICY SYSTEMS

CORE MODULE

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VERMONT CLUSTER

A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

NOVA UNIVERSITY

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A PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES GOVERNING ADMINISTRATIVE MERIT FOR FACULTY AT CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE

by

Robert F. Forest

EDUCATIONAL POLICY SYSTEMS VERMONT CLUSTER

ABSTRACT

It has been the concern of both faculty and administration as to the process by which administrative merit for faculty has been carried out during the past several years at Castleton State College. Much of this has been the result of a lack of written criteria and policies governing the merit allocations. Thus, it was the intent of this practicum to ascertain if some degree of compromise might include the evolvement of a published statement of criteria and policies on merit, after oral interviews with both the union and administrative representatives. A series of written questions on merit were submitted before the interview to both representitives, for the purpose of generating discussion on the topic.

As a result of the interviews it was very evident that both Dr. Warren Cook, the union delegate and Dean William Feaster, the administrative representative, agreed that the conceptual basis of a merit system for the purpose of rewarding and recognizing superior faculty performance was

valid and good. However, they both also agreed that the problem of implementation of such a program would be found in the specific areas of evaluation and adequate funding arrangements. These two problemsareas were evident throughout much of the literature and studies done on merit. With these problems of funding and evaluation providing a barrier to the implementation of an ideal merit system, it becomes obvious that a more limited scope of the merit program at Castleton becomes the only reality. Given the existing limits of structure, funds and time, the change of objective from the ideal to the real becomes how to implement the merit program in the fairest manner possible and with the highest level of consensus and support by the faculty as possible, thereby having the most impact on positive faculty morale.

It was concluded that this could best be achieved by organizing a committee of faculty and administrative representatives who would develop some agreed upon general written criteria for the awarding of merit at Castleton. The individual faculty member, using these written criteria as guidelines, would, at the time of the annual faculty evaluation report, request consideration for a merit award. This written request, supported by materials documenting the individual's performance, would be submitted directly to the office of the Academic Dean. The Castleton State College administration, using the agreed upon criteria as guidelines, would notify the faculty member as th their decision on awarding merit and the amount of the merit by August 31st.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	iii
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE	2
III. PROCEDURES	10
IV. RESULTS	14
V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	21
FOOTNOTES	29
BIBLIOGRAPHY	31
APPENDIXES	
A. LETTER FROM PRESIDENT WILSON	34
B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	35
C. NOTES FROM AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH DR. COOK	36
D. NOTES FROM AN ORAL INTERVIEW WITH DEAN FEASTER	38

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Castleton State College Merit Increases 1976-1977	12
2.	Castleton State College Merit Increases 1977-1978	13

I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a need at Castleton State College to develop relevant policies governing the awarding of administrative merit to faculty. The lack of any definitive, published criteria for determining merit awards has led to uncertainty on the part of some faculty members.

There existed very little written clarification as to the intent, reason or need for the merit system within the Vermont State Colleges. The limits and problems as related to the small amount of written documentation of the topic may be seen in the most recent "Agreement Between Vermont State Colleges and Vermont State Colleges Faculty Federation" which was effective as of September 1, 1977 and reads as follows:

> A. Each faculty member's salary shall be increased by $675, and
> B. Increased in total salaries in the amount of $86,848 shall be distributed in accordance with plans developed by the Federation, for the purpose of correction of salary inequities and
> C. Increases in total salaries in the amount of $43,424 shall be distributed by the Vermont State Colleges in recognition of merit and promotion in rank.
>
> The Vermont State Colleges and the Federation agree that all funds available shall be distributed, and distribution of inequity and merit monies shall not be subject to grievance and/or arbitration.[1]

The intent of this study was to ascertain if a possible compromise between some of the expressed concerns of the

faculty and concerns of the administration might evolve into some written criteria and a structured process by which the awarding of merit might be mutually agreeable.

The procedures used in attempting to achieve this goal were as follows:

1. Requesting the faculty union to release data involving merit at Castleton State College for the last several years.
2. An examination of the pertinent literature and research on the topic.
3. An oral interview with the union representative.
4. An oral interview with the designated administrative representative.
5. Evolution of a written proposal to be submitted to the Academic Dean.

II. BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In separate, but brief, conversations with both President Wilson and Dean Feaster at Castleton State College, it was noted on their parts that the concept of merit pay was good, but that the problem of implementation was very difficult. Both indicated several faculty had questioned and complained as to the merit system's present structure, but that the limit of time, energy and funds hindered the program's proper implementation. Both agreed that with adequate time, criteria development and funding the impact on faculty morale could be very significant. (See Appendix I.)

This practicum attempted to propose a written plan for the evolution and recommendations for policies governing the awarding of administrative merit by developing a procedure for the involvement of interested parties. At the same time

it was important to allow for some degree of flexibility on the administration's part in the process of development and implementation so necessary for the successful operation of many programs.

Merit salaries were first established by such a name in the early 1930's. A study by Young (1944) which examined merit type pay systems concluded that the instruments of measuring teacher merit were inadequate. After ten years of study on the relationship between teacher competency and salaries, Tiedman (1956) recommended four different salary schedule models that would recognize differentiated role fulfillment by teachers.

Although many school boards in the 1950's encouraged the adoption of merit pay programs, the actual number of school districts that went to a merit salary system were few. The National Education Association Research Division in 1957 found that the percentage of cities with populations of 30,000 or more using some type of merit system was only a 6.3 percent. The Research Division found in a later study in 1966 that the number of schools using a merit program had dropped to 5.0 percent.[2]

In the preliminary review of the literature and research on merit pay, it was found that the most successful programs combined a flexible element to allow room for administrational framework, yet also provided a structured element allowing for a faculty feeling of security.

It was assumed that a correctly implemented merit pay system would have a positive impact on all parties concerned and, especially, upon those faculty members who were justly rewarded for their extra efforts.

This assumption seemed to be supported by some of the research on the topic. Kerr, in an unpublished 1973 paper, argued that any management organization which depended upon greater effort than is typically expected for a given job assignment will, in all probability, fail if no specific reward for the task has been previously indicated. He noted that experimental programs often succeed on a short term basis because the reward for the program is the involvement with the experimental program itself. However, when such experimental programs are built into the operation of an on going system, the results consistently end in failure.[3]

On the other hand, Redfern (1974) pointed out that the failure of most merit pay plans for administrators has usually been the inability of the system to develop an adequate evaluation process.[4] Redfern stated that the key to a successful merit system is to directly link evaluation and an adequate compensation plan for administration. The difficulty is that evaluation and merit pay are often thought to be two basically conflicting functions. In fact, many competent personnel administrators feel both programs should be kept as discreet as possible. Contrarily, Redfern strongly supported developing these two functions into a complementary and compatable plan.[5]

Redfern argued that criteria, evaluation and merit pay are so closely interwoven that they must be considered as one total system. He stated that it is important to remember that evaluation is only a means and not an end in the total process. If this factor is considered, administrative leadership should be able to develop a system whereby a fair merit pay program can be implemented.[6]

Much of the research done on merit pay has often concluded with negative results. Liecht (1972) studied eight school systems with student populations of between 50,000 and 77,000 who the National Education Association said had some type of merit section in their negotiated agreement. The author found that not one of the school districts was currently implementing a truly merit pay program. From the data gathered, she concluded that the larger a school system, the more difficult it was to operate a merit pay plan. However, depending upon the school districts define merit pay, many schools have merit pay sections in their contracts that would fit isolated definitions of the term.[7]

Rabalais (1977) found after studying 109 full-time faculty members at Hinds Junior College, (Mississippi) that there was no significant difference between faculty members with a certain number of years teaching experience and number of graduate semester hours, when compared to the student evaluations of teaching effectiveness. Thus, Rabalais concluded that it was questionable for a higher educational

institutional use these criterias as part of a salary schedule.[8]

In a study of 800 faculty at a large university, Keene (1975) analyzed the relationship between merit salary increases and evaluation of performance. The specific areas studied included under recommended salary increases were teaching research, service, and adjustment for promotion and inequity. The second category of workload assignment included teaching workload, research, academic advising and service. The final category was the chairperson's evaluation of teaching effectiveness, research, advising, service, and general quality. After doing a correlation analysis on the variables involved, Keene found that the correlations were low enough to raise a question of doubt on the validity of the chairpersons' evaluations for recommending merit salary increases.[9]

Many attempts in the part to standardize and make salaries "fair" has led away from efforts to establish any merit type of system. The equal pay act passed by Congress in 1972 assumed that all workers should be paid the same if their job descriptions were equivalent. Although most universities establish faculty salaries based on the qualities of institutional service, community service, teaching and scholarship, it is difficult to assess them in all the same manner since many institutions will weigh one characteristic differently from another indtitution, quite often depending upon the goals of the university and the individual faculty member's ability to contribute toward achievement of these goals.

The fact that many colleges and universities have, to some extent, a merit system in an effort to reward some faculty members for their committment, combined with the various weighted emphases on certain areas as previously mentioned, makes almost impossible for the Wage and Hour staff to measure the professional judgements of university administrations with the criteria used to agree on salaries for workers in a factory. To assume that valid comparisons can be based on 1) degrees, 2) years of service, 3) publications and 4) teaching load, does not truly consider equal skill, effort, and responsibility of the faculty members being compared.

Once an objective reward system is established, it might be possible to standardize pay factors such as giving a merit award of $2,000 for successful completion of a terminal degree, $250 for publishing a book, $200 for an additional year of service, etc., etc. . . . . However, this attempt to establish a uniform reward system would further hinder the development or expansion of any merit system. It would also frustrate attempts to reward exceptional teaching or important research and thus not recognize individual differences of faculty members. Any institution which implemented a totally uniform reward system for faculty would quickly lose its best faculty members to competing universities.[10]

During the last several years there have been many studies in the area of salary differentials and sex discrim-

ination. One of the most recent studies, by Hoyt and Stewart (1976), indicated that there were considerable differences in faculty salaries based upon the sex of an individual. In their overview of the existing research they found that there was no conclusive data that might be used to study the interrelationship between faculty accomplishments and rewards in any merit systems. A summary of the studies concluded the following: 1) since an individual's personal value system plays an important part in any merit system, it was found that the structure of a merit system was more complex than earlier thought; 2) also more complex than previously assumed were the difficulties in measuring faculty accomplishments; 3) two particular considerations, faculty travel and faculty professional development assistance, were related to faculty accomplishments; 4) the only area that sex discrimination was evident was the factor of salary rewards.[11]

In the entire state of Vermont there is only one public school system that has attempted to develop a type of merit program. Several years ago with the encouragement of key school board members, Ms. Joyce Horst, principal of the Monument Elementary School in Bennington, Vermont, and various members of her teaching staff, organized an alternative pay committee whose purpose it was to develop other options to the single salary schedule typically used in most school districts.

In the opinion of the committee, the key to breaking this single salary schedule would be found in changing the

mode of teacher evaluations. They felt that the mode of evaluation should reflect the degree to which the teacher's salary reflects the performance of their students. Therefore, the commitee recommended a procedure whereby the teacher's evaluation would be the result of objective testing of student performance. The process would first involve the individual classroom teacher setting his of her instructional objectives, followed by a series of conferences with the building principal in which these objectives would be modified or agreed upon. By the end of a specified period of time the students would be listed as to the degree of success in reaching these objectives. This, in turn, would indicate how successful the teacher had been in achieving his or her objectives, thereby determining the extent of salary reward he or she would be given for the following academic year.[12]

In a discussion with the former elementary principal in Bennington, Philip Vierick, it became obvious that because of the many variables and personalities involved the alternative pay system at the Monument School never proved successful.

In a rather complete study of various merit pay systems, Conte and Mason (1972) concluded the three following points:

1. Because of the human relations problems and complexities of most merit systems, teachers have to be prepared and trained to deal with these problems beofre any plan is implemented.
2. A successful merit system program is only possible if a fair and objective evaluation system is included.

3. The final conclusion was that teacher morale was not primarily affected by a merit salary program.[13]

III. PROCEDURES

It is important to note at the start of this section that the definition of the following terms that were used for the purposes of this practicum are:

MERIT: 1) Due reward: a token of excellence. 2) Worth, excellence. 3) That which is counted to one as a cause or reason of deserving well; a praiseworthy quality. To earn by service or performance; deserve.[14]

MERIT SALARY SCHEDULE: A plan of paying salaries to teachers, supervisors, and administrators according to a definite scale of increases in salary, on the basis of proficiency rather than length of service.[15]

MERIT RATING SYSTEM: An evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching, supervision, or administration, based on a definite scale or collection of items accepted as a legitimate measure for such purposes.[16]

Since there was some dissatisfaction on the part of all of the concerned parties, both administration and faculty, as to the past method of allocation of administrative merit for faculty, the intent of this study was to propose a method whereby a broader consensus would be possible as to the means by which administrative merit was to be awarded. The following procedures have been completed:

1. A study of the appropriate literature and and research materials on the topic of merit has been completed. This analysis of the literature on the topic of merit was reviewed in the previous section.

2. There has been a presentation and explanation to a faculty union meeting regarding the request for the release, for the purposes of

the study, pertinent data and records on merit, so as to ascertain trends and dev velopments as to how the program has been implemented for the past several years.

3. A series of written questions to generate discussion on specific topics similar to the format developed by Liecht in 1972[17] (See Appendix II.) were submitted to Dean William Feaster, the designated administrative representative, as a means of suggesting topics to be discussed at a subsequent meeting. This was followed by an oral interview using the questions as topic areas to be expanded and developed beyond those included initially. Although no statistical analysis of questions was planned,, they were discussed and reviewed by several faculty members and the Nova University research Coordinator as to their appropriateness.

4. The same series of written questions were also submitted to Dr. Warren Cook, the union delegate, followed by a similar oral interview. The intent of giving both individuals the same written questions beforehand was to provide them both the opportunity to address the same topics.

5. A study was made of the only educational system presently operating a merit pay program in the State of Vermont.

6. The above results, materials and prodedures have been compiled into a proposed plan that is available for implementation as Castleton State College.

7. Copies of the report, including background data, suggested procedures and policies, have been submitted to the Academic Dean, Dr. Feaster, and the Assistant* Dean, Bruce Chaloux.

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*An incorrect title was used in the proposed practicum, page seven. The title used was Associate Dean Chaloux and it should have correctly read Assistant Dean Chaloux.

8. A meeting to discuss various aspects of the practicum was held with Assistant Dean Chaloux.

TABLE 1

CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE
MERIT INCREASES
1976-1977

MERIT FOR PROMOTIONS

Full Professor		Associate Professor	
J. D	$ $450	C. A	$350
S. S	450	B. F	350
C. W	450	D. K	350
	$1,350	A. R	350
		E. S	350
			$1,750

SPECIAL MERIT AWARDS
Leadership/Service to college/students/community/
curriculum development, and publication

G. A	$300	J. F.	$100
B. A	100	J. G	200
C. B	400	H. J	200
S. B	300	W. K	300
B. B	300	M. P	350
B. C	300	E. S	200
W. C	120	T. T	400
L. E	120	J. T	300
B. F	350	H. W	400

Merit for Promotions	$3,100
Special Merit Awards	$4,740
TOTAL	$7,840

TABLE 2

CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE
MERIT INCREASES
1977-1978

MERIT FOR PROMOTIONS

Full Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor	
R. D	$450	T. B	$350	P. B	$250
P. M	450	B. B	350	S. F	250
R. P	450	K. F	350	J. H	250
T. S	450	J. G	350	J. G	250
	$1,800	D. H	350		$1,000
			$1,750		

SPECIAL MERIT AWARDS
Leadership/service, curriculum development, scholarly publication

R. A.	$100	L. E	$150	B. O	$100
P. A.	250	B. F	150	S. P	400
W. A	200	K. F	200	R. P	200
G. A.	150	B. F	150	M. P	150
W. A	100	R. F	200	A. R	150
A. A	150	J. F	150	B. R.	100
S. A	200	R. G	220	C. S	150
B. A	300	J. G	250	T. S	400
C. B	300	D. H	150	L. S	400
S. B	400	J. H	150	T. S	100
G. B	100	E. H	150	E. S	150
J. B	100	L. J	150	T. T	200
B. B	150	H. J	300	J. T	150
M. C	100	D. K	250	D. W	250
M. C	100	W. K	300	H. W	300
W. C	150	V. L	150	C. W	100
N. D	200	J. L	150	E. W	350
L. E	100	R. M	150		

Merit for Promotions	$ 4,550
Special Merit Awards	$10,170
TOTAL	$14,720

IV. RESULTS

Having completed the background reading of the literature and research on the topic of merit pay for teachers, a series of questions on this topic were submitted to the two appropriate union and administrative representatives, Dr. Warren Cook, and Dean William Feaster. At that time an appointment for an oral interview was also requested and scheduled.

During the December, 1977, union meeting of the AFT-CIO State College Federation local at Castleton State College, Dr. Warren Cook broached the subject of releasing union data regarding the merit system at Castleton State College for the previous several years. Of the fifteen or so union members in attendance, there was no major opposition to releasing the data for academic purposes.

After about fifteen to twenty minutes of lively discussion, it was voted unanimously by the union members attending the meeting to allow the union president, Thomas Smith, or his delegate, Dr. Warren Cook, to release the merit data.

On January 11, 1978, the existing data on the merit awards at Castleton State College for the last two academic years was released by Mr. Thomas Smith, the local AFT Union president.

The merit award data, as seen in Tables 1 and 2 on pages 12 and 13, indicates a minimal amount of funding for

the purposes of merit. Although during the present academic year, 1977-1978, the total amount of dollars available was $14,720, after subbracting $4,550 for promotions, only $10,170 remained for merit awards for leadership and service to the institution, curriculum development at the College and scholarly publication in one's professional field. These merit awards were spread among a large number of faculty members with amounts ranging from $100 to $400. Altogether a total of fifty-three faculty members received a merit award in the above mentionad range. Of these fifty-three faculty, five individuals, T. Smith, K. Flowers, J. Gillen, S. Farrell, and J. Hansen received both promotion awards and special merit awards.

The total amount available for the 1976-1977 year was considerably smaller than the amount for 1977 - 1978. The total of $7,840 represents almost 50% less than the total for the 1977-1978 academic year. After using $3,100 for the purposes of promotion, there was only $4,740 for special merit awards. These special merit awards were granted to eighteen faculty and only one member, E. Sumner, recieved both merit and promotion awards during the same year.

After considerable time and effort, the merit award data for the 1975-1976 school year was made available only on an oral basis. Because this data is not of an official nature, it is believed that its use would not be legitimate for the purposes of this practicum.

In an oral interview on January 11, 1973, Dr. Warren Cook, the AFT Union member most knowledgeable about the merit system at Castleton State College, made a few general comments on the merit program within the Vermont State Colleges and also discussed some of the series of written questions on merit which had been previously submitted to him. A detailed copy of the notes taken during this oral interview may be found in Appendix C. The following comments are a summary of this interview.

Dr. Cook indicated that the present merit system was rooted in the legislation that created the negotiating process and therefore, was very difficult to eliminate or modify.

Although he stated that he supported the general concept of merit, he felt that given the present financial difficulties, it would be very hard to implement a merit system empirically and fairly. One of the problems has been that the merit criteria have only been stated orally and it has not always been clear in the past how these criteria were used.

He noted that the term "administrative" merit evidenced total control by the administration over merit monies. The last two years, under a new administration, the merit awards have been much fairer. Dr. Cook felt that Dean Feaster might agree to have a faculty and administration committee to work out some criteria for the merit system, but he felt that this merit committee should be independent of all other committees.

The usual process in the negotiations proceedings was that the union would try to keep the biggest percentage of the salary funds for inequities while the administration would logically try to keep the merit monies as large as possible.

Dr. Cook went on to say that a good merit system might be established by allowing each faculty member to submit a request for a merit award and then require him to document the request. By requiring the faculty to submit supportive materials, it allows the only person who really knows the extent of his own work to document it and avoids the need for an adequate retrieval system which does not exist.

On several occasions during the oral interview with Dr. Cook, it was mentioned that the Faculty Federation had no other choice than to accept the fact of merit within the collective bargaining agreement since Vermont law establishes its existence.

A closer examination of the Vermont Statutes relating to collective bargaining by state employees find the following:

a. The term "merit system" means the system developed to maintain an efficient career service in the state government under public rules, which, among other provisions, includes appointment through competitive examination; nondiscrimination because of race, sex, politics, national origin, or religion; an equitable and adequate compensation plan; tenure, contingent on evaluated capacity and service.

b. Merit system principles are:
1. Recruiting, selecting, and advancing employees on the basis of their relative ability, knowledge, and skills, including

open consideration of qualified applicants for initial appointment;

2. Providing equitable and adequate compensation consistent with available funds;

3. Training employees, as needed, to assure high high quality performance;

4. Retaining employees on the basis of the adequacy of their performance, correcting inadequate performance, and seperating employees whose inadequate performance cannot be corrected;

5. Assuring fair treatment of applicants and employees in all aspects of personnel administration without regard to political affiliation, race, color, national origin, sex, or relegious creed and with proper regard for their privacy and constitutional rights as citizens; . . . [18]

In two meetings with Dean William Feaster, the first one on October 31, 1977 and the second on January 25, 1978, he refledted on the general philosophical concept of merit and specifically on the problems of implementing the merit program at Castleton State College. The notes of the details of those two sessions can be found in Appendix D. The following are summaries of these two interviews.

During the first meeting, Dean Feaster, stated that the biggest problem with the merit program was that there was no Vermont State Colleges system-wide policy in dealing with the topic. The only exception to that was the fact that the State College Presidents agreed to take promotions off the top of the merit allocations. The remaining amounts have been used for rewarding completion of degree requirements, award of professional publications in a faculty member's

field, professional publications, etc. In some cases faculty members have received both merit awards, one for promotion and one for some of the special service categories. Part of the problem has been that the merit awards make it more difficult to move on to any salary schedule since it, in fact, widens the differences between individual faculty members. The sad fact is that a full professor with a terminal degree and many years of experience will not have a chance for a sizeable salary increase, other than merit.

The existing merit system has tried to consider merit as related to total salary and time within the rank of the faculty member. After these two factors are considered, the decision as to the adjustments has to be made. To some degree, the decision on merit has to be subjective. Part of the problem is that the present system has no means of reviewing tenured faculty who may, in fact, be eligible for merit.

In general, the purpose of merit is to recognize faculty members for service to the college and professional accomplishment. Besides the previously mentioned criteria for merit, successful grant applications for the college, professional conferences, curriculum development and services contributing to the institution beyond grant funds.

In the second meeting with Dean Feaster on January 25, 1978, he indicated that Castleton has never really had a merit system in the true sense. Earlier, when Dr. Dundas was president, there was an amount of money he could use for merit,

but no criteria in writing. The presidents for years had the discretion of using the funds for increasing faculty salaries or hiring additional staff as needed. During the last fiscal crisis there was no funds designated for merit purposes. When Dr. Burns was acting president, there was a formula established that worked out hhe amounts designated for each area.

Dr. Feaster added that a key point to remember was that there was not a lot of money for merit, thus, when a faculty member receives a small award it has the tendency to discourage morale rather than raise morale. Although teaching is not listed as a criteria for special merit awards, it weighs heavily in reappointment and promotion. The criteria of teaching performance is built into several areas of the merit system especially into the promotion considerations.

In general, merit is psychologically important. Since the Vermont State Colleges give very little reward, although that is changing a little in recent years, merit awards mean more for recognition of accomplishment than actual financial award. General written criteria for merit would help to provide the faculty with the knowledge that they are being measured in some systematic way. A system of evaluation continues to be one of the most difficult aspects of merit. A good merit plan should help the tenured, full professor to get some salary increases when he of she is not eligible in other categories.

Because of the present financial crisis, there are new problems confronting all aspects of the State Colleges including the area of merit. There needs to be much more long range planning. In the final analysis, the amounts designated for salaries in general, and merit in particular, will be decidedaat the negotiations table.

V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After an extensive examination of the literature and research studies done on the topic of merit pay, along with an analysis of the present data and circumstances surrounding merit at the Vermont State Colleges, it becomes obvious that because of the many variables, such as adequate time and lack of funding, the ideal theoretical concept of merit will not be realized at the Vermont State Colleges for many years to come. Since the vast majority of studies on merit conclude the same thing, Castleton State College is not very different from most of the other educational institutions on the subject of merit.

However, because of Castleton State College's unique situation of high trust level it might be possible to maximize the positive aspects of the present merit and possibly extend it a little further than presently exists.

It was interesting and exciting to find how closely and to what extent both Dean Feaster, representing the administration, and Dr. Cook, the union representative, agreed on specific and general aspects of merit. Not only does this

general area of possible compromise on the topic of merit exist, but it was also obvious that there was a professional respect and personal trust level seldom observed between management and union delegates. It is with this in mind that the real opportunity to not only help structure the merit p n, but also to furhher develop the general trust level of all Castleton State College faculty Became apparent.

The same general trust level was not as evident during the December, 1977, union meeting when approximately fifteen union members voted to release the data on the merit awards for the past several years. It was interesting to note the hesitation on the part of some of the members. Questions li like, "Is this public information?" were made until it was made clear that all information was public and already available to the membership who desired it. Dr. Cook pointed out that, although the data on merit was available, only one or two union members during the last several years ever asked to see the specific allocations.

It was also interesting to learn the lack of knowledge and misinformation that several faculty members had regarding the topic of merit. Several union members were surprised and shocked to hear that one of the existing policies for awarding merit was based on individual faculty member being promoted.

The proposed merit plan would start with the Castleton State College Faculty Forum voting to elect, upon the request of the college administration, one faculty member from each

of the five major divisions, to participate on a merit criteria committee with delegated members of the administration. This committee would develop general written criteria to be used in the awarding of merit at Castleton State College. This set of merit criteria would then be submitted to the President of Castleton State College for his approval and/or modification before publication in the Castleton State College Faculty Handbook. Some of the possible merit criteria that have been proposed are modifications of various tenure and promotion criteria found in the previously mentioned Faculty Handbook.

The next step would involve the individual faculty member requesting consideration for merit when he of she submits the annual faculty evaluation form. This request, with the appropriate documentation supporting it, would go directly to the academic dean for his consideration. The dean, using the general written criteria, would make the decision on the merit award and the amount.

The candidate for merit would submit his or her request with the faculty annual report and the appropriate documentation to be assessed during the regular annual evaluation. The candidate would be notified of the results of this merit assessment by the end of the summer session.

The Castleton State College administration would award merit as recognition of general and sustained excellence in the fulfillment of professional responsibilities and/or for excellence in professional areas beyond which are not normally considered normal responsibilities.[19]

Merit awards would result after thorough evaluations by the candidates' appropriate administrative representative.

Candidates for merit would be evaluated in the following general four areas: 1) teaching, 2) college service, 3) community service, and 4) professional development.[20] In accordance with the mission of the Vermont State Colleges, teaching would continue to be recognized as the most important activity to be considered in the evaluation process for merit.

Although the following categories are subjective in nature the merit advisory committee may choose to use them as a basis for discussion. For each of the categories described a weighted scale of one to five would be awarded to the faculty member who has requested consideration for a merit award. The weighted factors would be as follows:

5- recognized as outstanding in that particular category by the majority of the college community.

4- recognized by both college peers and students as superior in a specific category.

3- performs at an acceptable level of competency in the given category.

2- participates in a variety of activities to an in-depth degree.

1- in-depth participation in at least one activity.[21]

It would then be assumed that a faculty member, in order to be awarded merit, would have to achieve some total numerical score by adding each of the four categories. For example, if the total required was ten points, an individual

faculty member might receive four points in teaching, one point in college service, one point in community service, and four points in professional development.

The teaching category may be evaluated in several ways: Student course evaluations, faculty counseling responsibilities, office hours and attendance at required meetings. These and other areas might be evaluated for each course taught during the academic year. Additional bonus points might be awarded because of an outstanding performance in this category.[22]

As part of the professional development category would be included the subtopic of research and publication. The following areas might be included under this subtopic:

1. Book published.
2. Articles published in professional journals.
3. Research in progress.
4. Book reviews.
5. Monographs or newspaper articles.

In the instance of research in progress, the faculty member should submit a report on the progress of the research at the end of the semester. This report would include the topic title, results since the last semester, target date for completion, planning problems, and possible college support desired.[23]

The professional development category would also include active participation in, but not simple attendance, at, regional, state, national or international professional

meetings, seminars, institutes and conferences in a faculty member's professional area. Active participation includes such activities as chairing or addressing conferences or seminars, directing or studying in workshops, organizing conferences, serving as an officer in a professional society.

In general, for a merit award in the professional development category the faculty member must demonstrate scholarship and evidence of continued professional growth. Evidence of this demonstrated growth might very well be the completion of a graduate degree program from the Master's degree level and higher up, in the major field of the faculty member. Terminal degrees in a teaching field would include the Ph.D., D.Ed., D.Sc., D.A., D.M.A., M.F.A., S.J.D., and Master's in Nursing.[24]

The community service category would include the usual membership and leadership of the broad community beyond the campus. The following might be some of the roles in community service:

1. A position as an officer in a public body at a national or state level.
2. A role as an officer in a service or religious organization.
3. Membership in a public body.
4. Service as a consultant to a community body.
5. Public speaker to a public body.

The key here is the degree of impact on the community at large.[25] Any number of voluntary public service functions

at the local and state level might be included in this category.

The final category to be assessed for merit would be college service. One of the primary factors of evaluation would be the extent to which this helps to further the institution's goals. Some of the pertinent areas would be:

1. Chairperson of a standing committee.
2. Involvement in curricular program development.
3. Membership on standing college committees.
4. Officer of college faculty association.
5. Membership on ad hoc committee.[26]

All of the four previously discussed categories must be addressed in the individual faculty member's request for consideration for merit. Since all faculty members have free access to their personnal files, it would be their responsibility to maintain accurate and detailed documentation of their professional competency in the official files. When requesting consideration for merit it would be up to the faculty member to provide the additional documentation of their professional performance.

Documentation, such as copies of professional papers, records of public service and records of business experiences and artistic creations, should be presented and should be evaluated by the faculty member's professional colleagues, where such accomplishments are being submitted as part of the documentation for a merit award. In addition, at least

two letters of recommendation should attest to the value of the faculty member's accomplishments. At least one letter of support should be from a professional colleague in the candidate's own department or teaching field and a second letter from a qualified extra-mural referee.[27]

Many of the questions regarding the merit system at Castleton State College may end up being totally academic since the "Rutland Daily Herald" newspaper reported that the Vermont State College Trustees recently requested the five college presidents to analyze the mounting financial crisis that was projected to end in a two million dollar deficit by the end of the present fiscal year.

Dr. Donald Wilson, President of Castleton State College, speaking for the five college presidents, proposed several belt tightening measures including the "saving about $887,000 by increasing staff productivity and cutting the 'bare bones needs of the colleges' by five percent."[28]

It therefore, appears unlikely that there will be any significaat funding of the merit category in the forseeable future of Castleton State College or any of the Vermont State Colleges. The significance of this lack of funding on the previous proposed merit program cannot be ascertained at this time.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Agreement Between Vermont State Colleges and Vermont State Colleges Faculty Federation. VSCFF, AFT, Local 3180, AFL-CIO, December 1976, p. 38.

[2]Robert L. Ebel, Ed., Encyclopedia of Educational Research. London: The MacMillian Company, 1969, p. 332.

[3]Eugene G. Kerr, Humanizing Computer Managed Instruction Systems: The Difference Between Success and Failure. ERIC Document ED 087 419, April 1973, p. 6.

[4]George B. Redfern, Appraising Managerial Performance for Salary Purposes. ERIC Document ED 087 123, February 1974, p. 1.

[5]Ibid., pp. 8-9.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Carroll D. Liecht, 1971-1972 Survey of Merit Pay Plans in Public School Systems. ERIC Document ED 070 197, March 1972, pp. 5-7.

[8]Micheal J. Rabalais, The Relationship Between Number of Graduate Semester Hours, Years of Teaching Experience and Student Evaluations of Overall Rating of Instructors for a Selected Sample of Junior College Faculty. Meeting of the AERA, New Orleans, ERIC Document ED 143 398, 1978, p. 3.

[9]T. Wayne Keene, Faculty Salary Increases and Evaluation of Selected Performance Variables. ERIC Document ED 119 546, 1975, p. 2.

[10]Richard A. Lester, "The Equal Pay Boondoggle", in Change. September 1975, EJ 124 419, pp. 39, 40-43.

[11]Donald P. Hoyt and Michael O. Stewart, Faculty Rewards, Faculty Accomplishments, and Sex Discrimination. Association for Institutional Research, ERIC Document ED 131 753, May 1976, p. 21.

[12]Joyce Horst, Report of the Alternative Pay Committee. Monument Elementary School, Bennington, Vermont, pp. 1-3.

[13]Anthony E. Conte and Eugene R. Mason, Merit Pay: Problems and Alternatives Perspectives Series No. 2. New Jersey State Department of Education, Trenton, ERIC Document ED 064 791, 1972, p. 24.

[14]Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, Publishers, 1965, p. 527.

[15]Carter V. Good, Ed., Dictionary of Education. McGraw-Hill Company, 1973, p. 343.

[16]Ibid., p. 474.

[17]Liecht, loc. cit., p. 12. See Appendix II, p.

[18]Acts and Resolves Passed By The General Assembly of the State of Vermont 1971. Montpelier: Secretary of State of Vermont for the State of Vermont, May 1972, p. 181.

[19]"Vermont State College Administrative Policy and C Criteria on Promotion";" VSC Board of Trustees, January 23, 1976, in Castleton State College Faculty Handbook. Revised September 1977, p. 3.

[20]John E. Weinrich, "Appraising Faculty Performance for Merit Increases";" in Improving College and University Teaching. Autumn 1976, EJ 153 856, p. 247.

[21]Faculty Handbook. pp. 9-10.

[22]Weinrich, Op. Cit., p. 247.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Faculty Handbook. pp. 8-9.

[25]Weinrich, Op. Cit., p. 248.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Faculty Handbook. p. 9.

[28]Robert Sherman, "VSC: All Pay More", in The Sunday Rutland Herald, Rutland, Vermont, January 22, 1978, p. 1.

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APPENDIX A

Letter from Dr. Donald W. Wilson, President
Castleton State College
Castleton, Vermont

FROM THE DESK OF DONALD W. WILSON

Dear Bob,

Your letter on merit pay is of concern to me because Castleton, nor the Vermont State Colleges, does not have a comprehensive policy. I will look forward to talking with you about it because Itagree that something needs to be done on a consistent basis. I will be happy to discuss ang and all questions raised in your letter.

Thanks,

Don

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONS REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE MERIT PROGRAM FOR FACULTY PRESENTLY BEING USED AT CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE

The following questions are suggested simply as possible topics that will be discussed in further detail during the oral interview that will be scheduled in the near future.

QUESTIONS-

1. Can you describe the main features of the administrative merit plan for faculty at Castleton State College?
2. Is the merit program described in writing? Are there guidelines, criteria, specific procedures, etc.?
3. How long has the Castleton State College merit plan been in effect?
4. What are the stated purposes of the merit plan?
5. How do you define merit and what does yourrplan constitute as merit?
6. What are the procedures for finding and selecting individual faculty members who are to be considered for merit?
7. Are there regular procedures for evaluating faculty members? How often does this take place? Do these evaluating procedures in any way determine the individuals selected for merit?
8. Is there a limit as to the number of faculty members receiving merit?
9. How did the merit system develop at Castleton State College?
10. In your view, how effective has the merit plan been in the past? In faculty opinion, how effective has the plan been?
11. Have there been any studies as to the effects of merit pay on faculty or student performance?
12. Do you have any general comments related to merit pay?

APPENDIX C

Castleton State College
Castleton, Vermont

January 11, 1978

NOTES FROM AN ORAL INTERVIEW- DR. WARREN COOK, UNION DELEGATE
TOPIC- MERIT PROGRAM AT CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE

The reason for the development of the merit system in Vermont was rooted in legislation that created the negotiating process for the state colleges. Nothing the union can do will change that. Management rights section, "Consistency with the merit system", in accordance with administrative funds available. Law Book 905A Chapter 27, July 1st, 1970. In the negotiations the administration tried to keep the merit segment as large as possible.

I support the concept of merit but it should be empirical and fair. Given the difficulties, I am not sure it can be operated successfully at the present time. It might be helpful to have a faculty and administration committee to work on merit. The funds have not always been used fairly. The local campus union might support some merit system with changes.

The most knowledgeable people on merit at Castleton State College are Patterson, Jordan and Feaster.

The adminstration has said orally that the criteria for merit has been promotion, service, etc.. This quite often is a disadvantage to the faculty member at the top. It is not always clear that the criteria orally described are actually used when one examines the merit awards in the past.

There should be some sort of empirical purpose-fair way-possibly with peers, that might strengthen the merit system. The term"administratvie" merit means the control over the funds is entirely controlled by the administration. The first year merit was implemented under Acting President Burns. It was very unfair. The former Division Directors, although not being members of the union for the complete year, were waarded large merit increases to ease their transition back

to regular faculty status. The last two years have been much fairer. Dean Peaster might agree to put the merit issue into a committee but avoid putting chairmen on the committee. The committee should be independent of all other committees, i.e. -promotion and tenure, etc..

During the negotiations the administration would try to put the biggest percentage into merit while the union would try tp put the biggest percentage into inequities. The administration would keep this issue for the last minute.

At the last negotiations session, some administrators were almost ready to buy a salary schedule but some members of the union did not want to wait any longer. One of the major problems with implemnting a salary schedule will be the great amount of funds and level of money it needs to be implemented in a salary schedule. Mathematically the union inequity plan will never get the faculty on step in a salary schedule. Rank was not used fortthe union schedule because of related problems, so the union went back to the original source, de degrees and years of experience. The future salary schedule does not seem possible with the present financial problems of the state. The salary schedule makes it better at the starting level but makes salary increases for faculty at the higher level disproportionate.

A good merit program might be set up by allowing each faculty member to submit a request for merit and then requiring them to develop and submit a list documenting these reasons on why they should receive merit. No one else knows the extent that an individual faculty member does meritorous work other than himself. One reaction of the faculty at first will be "more paperwork". However, after reacting emotionally, they may buy it. By having them submit documentation themselves, it avoids the need for an adequate retrieval system which does not exist.

Since a limited number of faculty members rather consistently receive merit and with the limited funds involved, faculty do not view the merit system as being overly effective.

APPENDIX D

Castleton State College
Castleton, Vermont

October 31, 1977

NOTES FROM AN ORAL INTERVIEW- DEAN WILLIAM FEASTER, ADMINISTRATION REPRESENTATIVE- TOPIC- MERIT PROGRAM AT CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE

The biggest problem with merit is that there is no systemwide policy. (Vermont State Colleges) on how merit should be determined. In the first place, the contract sets a percentage of the contract to be decided upon as a merit section. Merit has a percentage of the grass used for teacher salaries. So much money across the board. Inequities and administrative merit. Three pots with percentages as opposed to dollar amounts. The Vermont State College presidents did discuss merit and the area of promotion was the only one agreed upon as a firm basis for merit. Thus, there would be no systemwide basis for the merit program. The first restraint was promotion- off the top. This left approximately $7, 650 after the promotions. Some other criteria that were used were: 11 faculty member completed a doctorate, 2) faculty members completed their masters, 1 faculty member completed a B.A., 1 faculty member completed a professional certificate status, 1 faculty member published a book. In some cases they may get both. In addition, those persons who have made outstanding contributions to the institution received merit. Many faculty should get additional merit if more funds were available, beyond the $100, $150, $200, etc. allocated. This, in fact, causes greater differences in any attempt to move to a salary schedule. A Full Professor who has a terminal degree and many years experience has little chance other than merit.

The merit system considers an analysis of relative salaries within rank although it is interesting to note that union inequities scale does not use rank, while merit also looks at service to the institution. The decision as to adjustments is then made. It has to be subjective to some degree. Part of the problem is that there is no means of reviewing tenured faculty. There should be some sort of review in all cases, possibly every five years.

The general purpose of the merit system, even in a general way, is to recognize faculty for service and accomplishment. Some consideration of the following areas are also given: 1) promotion, 2) additional formal recognition, 3) professional certificate requirements, 4) publications, 5) conferences, 6) success at grant application, 7) contribution to the institution beyond grant funds.

Castleton State College has not really had a merit plan. When President Dundas was here he had an amount of money to play with, but nothing in writing. About 1963, when the Vermont State Colleges were organized there were salary amounts budgeted. The president, for years, had the discretion to either increase present faculty salaries or put on additional staff.

It has evolved that the salary increases were often based upon the recommendation of the Promotion-Tenure Committee and student evaluations. In general, a sum was allocated for merit, and a sum for salary increases. Percentages across the board, and some for merit, some for additional degrees and some for writing a book. During the last fiscal crisis, about 1974, there was no merit. When Dorothy Burns was acting president, and possibly the last year Dr. Abel was president, there was a formula worked out.

The state college presidents decided funds for promotion to each rank. Since collective bargainin set specific sums of monies including merit, the Presidents' Council decided to include promotion within the merit pot. Thus, the discretion for merit comes after the funds for promotion come off the top. Also included are 1) earned degrees, 2) publication of a book, 3) publishing professional papers in a journal, 4) faculty that may not have received an increase in any other way.

The key point to remember is that there is not a lot of money for merit. Thus, when a small amount is distributed for merit, it might have the tendency to discourage faculty. Although teaching is not written specifically as one of the merit criteria, it weighs heavily in reappointment and promotion consideration.

The merit system should help the tenured, full professor who might not be eligible for an increase in salary in other areas. General written criteria would help provide the faculty with the knowledge that they are being measured in some systematic way. Evaluation is one of the most difficult aspects of merit.

In general, merit is psychologically extremely important. Since the VSC give very little material reward, although this is changing a little now, merit awards mean more for recognition of accomplishment. In some cases in the past, double merit has been given, for earned degree and promotion.

With the present financial crisis, there are now more problems. There needs to be some long range plan. How much for merit and how much for salaries that will be allocated will involve trade offs and so forth.